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Editor's preface

This is a reprinting of the rare 1951 work *A Message of Croat-Moslems to their religious brethren in the World* by Dr. Džafer Kulenović. It was translated by an unnamed individual from the Serbian-Croatian language into English. The language spoken in former Yugoslavia is called Croatian in the text. The Bosnian dialect is now recognized as a separate language. This is a part of the path to that linguistic recognition was the Bosnian Muslims finding their political, social, and religious identity through the turbulent times of war, occupation, and Communist pressure against Islam.

Kulenović graphically shows how Bosnians were oppressed by Serbs, like the Croat Catholics, and many Bosnian Muslims allied themselves with the Croatian Nation and were even called "the Flowers of the Croat Nation" in Croatian Nationalist Literature. The assassination of Muslim religious leaders and the destruction of Mosques, villages, and Islamic heritage in World War II and earlier by the Serbs are also given a needed voice in this pamphlet.

This text was originally presented as a speech for the 1950 Muslim World Congress in Karachi, Pakistan, which, for numerous reasons, Kulenović was unable to attend. In 1951, the Bosniak Community in Chicago leader Arif Delić, a well-known Bosnian Community activist and foreman of a construction company that helped dig the tunnels for

the Chicago subway system and other major infrastructure sponsored the publication as a twenty-two page pamphlet without author, publisher or translator attribution. It is hoped that the reprinting of this work will encourage the production of scholarly editions of other rare works of Bosnian and American Islamic Literature.

There have been no corrections of the text other than the correction of typographic errors, grammar mistakes, and the standardization of personal and place names. Footnotes have been added when historic figures are mentioned with no elaboration in the text.

Dr. Džafer Kulenović was a major Islamic leader in Bosnia and Croatia in the 1930s and 1940s, but is little discussed today. There is only one collection of his writings available in the Bosnian language (a language which he called Croatian) and the work below is the only one from his pen ever translated into the English language.

Dr. Džafer-beg Kulenović (1891 - 1956) was the Vice President of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska) between 1941 and 1945, being one of the highest ranking Muslims in the NDH. He was also President of Yugoslav Moslem Organization since 1939.

Kulenović was born in Rajinovci (near Bihać) on February 17, 1891. He served as president of the Yugoslav Moslem Organization, the largest Bosniak political party at the time, following the death of Dr. Mehmed Spaho (1883-1939). He was a minister in the

Kingdom of Yugoslavia's government before the Second World War.

He became the vice-president of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) on November 7, 1941 and held the position to war's end. He had actually succeeded his older brother Osman Kulenović (1889-1947) in this position.

After the fall of the NDH, Kulenović immigrated to Syria. He lived there until his death on October 3, 1956 in Damascus. While in Syria, the Croats in Argentina published a collection of his journalistic writings.¹

Only a few months before his death, the Croatian Liberation Movement was formed, with Dr. Kulenović being one of the founders and signatories. Hopefully, the reprinting of this work will show his political and religious views in his own words rather than through the distorted lens of anti-Islamic and extremist Serbian nationalist yellow journalism.

Muhammed Abdullah al-Ahari
Doctorate of Education Leadership Candidate
(University of Phoenix)
Chicago, Illinois
May 22, 2011

¹ Dr. Džafer Kulenović, *Sabrana Djela 1945-1956*. Buenos Aires: Movement of Croatian Liberation, 1978.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

It is an honor and privilege to submit to the Second Session of the World Moslem Conference our message and our greetings. We pray to the Almighty for the success of this Congress, for the welfare of the Moslem World and the world at large. We send our fraternal greetings to all participants of the Congress, to all the representatives of the Islamic Nations and States, gathered in the state of Pakistan, in order to work for the improvement of the Islamic people in the world.

In sending our greetings we wish to repeat once more our happiness upon the achievement of the national independence of the great nation of Pakistan. We express our happiness upon the accomplishment which this great Islamic Nation, has achieved in such a short time. We pray that God Almighty may crown the work of this Congress with great success, for a better future of the free Islamic Nations as well as for those who still suffer persecution and enslavement.

We Croats-Moslem in emigration very deeply regret that we are not able to take a part in the work of this Congress. We regret even more so because we do not speak only in our name, but also in the name of our enslaved brethren who are deprived of any possibility of speaking in their own name in our Communist-controlled country. We were fortunate in escaping from that slavery, and it is our duty to speak before the world in their name as well as our own. It

is through us that they now speak to the World Moslem Conference, and they beg of us that we do not forget them.



Dr. Džafer Bey Kulenovic, leader of Croat Moslems and successor to late Dr. Mehmed Spaho, the organizer and president of Moslem Party and fearless champion for the rights of Croat Moslems.



Mr. Arif Dilic, a prominent Croat Moslem in U. S. A., who has acquired many friends among American - Croat Moslems and his fellow Americans.



Independent State of Croatia.

THE CROAT NATION WITH ONE MILLION MOSLEMS

According to many historians the Croat Nation comes from the highlands of Iran. The Croats came to their present homeland in the first part of the sixth century after Christ. They live in southeastern Europe; the eastern boundary of Croatia is the Drina River, thus separating Croatia from Serbia. For many centuries this river was an established boundary between "East and West." The Western border of Croatia reaches up to the port of Trieste in Italy, on the Adriatic coast and stretches towards the South-East along the Adriatic Sea, in fact, representing the Italian boarder. On the West, Croatia is bordered by Slovenia and Austria and to the North by Hungary.

The Croat Nation at present numbers approximately 6 million people, of which about one million are Croats of Moslem religion, the remainder being predominately of Roman-Catholic religion. **The Croat Nation is the only European nation of which a large percentage of people belong to the Islamic religion.**

Before we start dealing with the importance of these Croat-Moslems to the Islamic World in general, we herewith take the liberty of giving the chief historical outlines of the past and present situation, so to give the whole complex problem an easier understanding and also to point out the importance of the faith of these Moslems who are living on the most north-western part of the Islamic World.

THE FIRST HISTORICAL CONTACTS BETWEEN CROATS AND ISLAM

Soon after the arrival of the Croats in their present homeland, first contacts with the eastern Islamic nations were made by sea in the course of seventh century after Christ. This contact was with the Arab nations, at that time the only bearers of the Islamic Faith. We wish to point out that these nations from the beginning were interested in each other not only because of commercial interests, but also because of mutual military cooperation against their common enemy – the Byzantine Empire.

In Abdurrahman Syrian army, there were according to documentary evidence, 20,000 Christian soldiers. In 677 A.D. during the attack on Istanbul the Croat soldiers were allied with the Arab army. During the struggle for the independence of the Croat Adriatic Coast against the Byzantine occupiers (802-812 A.D.) the Arab armies aided the Croats. Special cultural ties were affected between the Croatian and Arab culture during the Arab domination of Spain. It is well known that a good number of Croats occupied an important position at the court of Cordoba's Caliphs and in the administration in Arab Spain. Besides the Croats being excellent soldiers (guards and troops) and high ranking generals and officers, there were also architects. It is assumed that the very well known architect of Cairo, and the Islamic University of El-Azhar, Džafar, was of Croat origin, who was a very distinguished person in that time.

The Croats took a prominent part in literary life, and the best known Caliph, Abdurrahman III (912-961) had friendly diplomatic contacts with the Croat rulers. The Croat historians, Catholic, as well as Moslem, quote that all Croats, who were in service with the Arab nations were never compelled to change their Catholic faith for Islam. Many of these men remained Christians, as they had been originally, but some converted to the Islamic faith of their own will. One of these Moslem converts erected the famous Mosque on the island of Sicily.

ISLAM BECOMES THE RELIGION OF ONE PART OF THE CROATIAN NATION

Besides these afore mentioned contacts, the most important one was affected after the Turks entered Croatia, passing through the other Balkan countries. First they reached the Croatian provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1463-1482), at which time a large number of Croats converted to the Islam, and thus the Islam became a factor of importance in the whole Croat nation. That was a new era for the Islamic faith in South-Central Europe. The Catholic and Muslim historians agree that Islamic Turkey never recurred to forcible conversion to the Moslem faith. Before the arrival of the Turks in Croatia, a good number of the Croatian people, living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which at that time was an independent Kingdom, converted to a new faith-called "Bogumili" (Beloved by God).² By joining this new religion they tried to free themselves from the stringent, centralistic domination tendencies of the Catholic Church, which did her best to affect the national independence. In order to resist successfully the western and northern aggression carried out

² For further details on this medieval Balkan heresy see the following work: L. P. Brockett, *The Bogomils of Bulgaria and Bosnia: The Early Protestants of the East* (1879); V. Sharenkoff, *A Study of Manicheism in Bulgaria* (New York, 1927); D. Obolensky, *The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Cambridge, 1948), reprint New York, 1978; and, S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy* (Cambridge, 1947).

through the State and Church, the Dukes of Bosnia and Herzegovina, willing to maintain their freedom at any cost, converted to the new religion, and from militaristic point of view asked the Turks to assist them in their battle for Independence. For similar reasons, it is easily understood that after the arrival of the Turks in Bosnia and, Herzegovina, the children of the Hercegs (Dukes) willingly became members of the Islamic religion (for example, the son of Duke Herceg Stephen adopted the name Ahmed Pasha Hercegović). Naturally this facilitated the conversion of the remaining population to Islamism.

THE CROAT MOSLEMS IN THE TURKISH EMPIRE

Sultan Mehmed II, El-Fateh (1432-1481), after, conquering and incorporating into the Turkish Empire, Bosnia and Herzegovina, handed to the head of the Catholic Church in Bosnia; fra Andjel Zvizdović, "*AHAD-NAMA*,"³ i.e., a favorable agreement, by which full citizenship rights were granted and religious freedom guaranteed. The Turks ruled over Bosnia and Herzegovina for more than 400 years, but all of power was in the hands of the native Croat Moslems who converted to Islamism. As the Croats who lived outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina resisted the Western oppressors, so also (lid their Moslem brothers resist any encroachment on the part of the Turks when their autonomy was endangered. An example of indomitable will for freedom is the rebellion of Hussein Bey Gradašević (the "Dragon of Bosnia") who had incited an insurrection of all the Croats against the Turkish Sultan in 1831. The Ottoman Empire, realizing the Croatian love for freedom, appointed men of Croat blood as governors of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, the Sultans placed many Croat Moslems in highest positions of the Ottoman Empire. Generation after generation of distinguished Croat families was held in continuous service in the highest positions of the court of Istanbul and over all of the Ottoman Empire. The first Croat, who reached the highest possible position in the

³ *Achd-Nama* in the original.

Ottoman Empire that of a Grand Vizier, was Mahmud Pasha Croat Abagović (d. 1474). The Croat language, besides the Turkish, became the second official language in the Ottoman administration. Twenty four men of Croat blood held the position of Grand Vizier in the Ottoman Empire. According to Turkish historians, these men were considered the pillars on which the Turkish Empire was built.

The Turkish Empire was at its peak at the time of Suleiman the Magnificent (1494-1566). During the peak of his power, from the 1522-1566, nine Viziers of Croat blood held this Position: Mahmud Pasha Sokolović (1506-1579), Rustem Pasha Croat (1500-1561), Murad Pasha Croat (1520-1611, term in office 1606-1611), Mehmed Pasha Croat, Tahvil Pasha Kulenovich Croat, etc. All of these retained as an addition to their name, the denomination "Croat." The Turkish historian Mustafa 'Ali (1541-1599) in his work "*Kunh al-Akhbar*" who during his 30 years of historical research in Bosnia learned to know the Croatian people and wrote the following:

"Doubtless the Bosnians who belong to the Croat nation distinguished themselves as exemplary soldiers by good heartedness and belief in god; as '*agas*' (nobles) and officers, by education and good qualities; when reaching the honor of grand vizier, they are prudent, just and self-respectable in their administration, so that they are

celebrated by the great, and praised by the high."

Another Turkish historian Evliya Çelebi (1611-1682) in his *Seyāhatnāme* described the Croat noble, Vojvoda Nikola Zrinski (of Catholic faith) as "a Duke full of nobility and chivalrous qualities."

THE CROAT MOSLEMS DURING THE AUSTRIAN-HUNGARIAN OCCUPATION (1878-1918)

According to the decision of the Berlin Congress, Bosnia and Herzegovina were incorporated into the Empire, but this did not occur without the rebellion of the Bosnian Croats led by Hadži Lojo.⁴ The occupants soon realized the desires of the people regarding their national independence. Consequently, the Austrian government was very tactful in dealing with the people in order to draw them closer to the Central European spheres. During this period the Moslems of Bosnia and Herzegovina learned how to protect their religious and economic interests. By this position they became a link between the western civilization and the Islamic world which looked upon them with a special admiration.

⁴ This was an insurrection against Austrian-Hungarian rule in 1878 led by Hadži Lojo that included both Muslims and Serbs.

THE SERBS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

At the beginning of the Turkish rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina the Turks brought along thousands of auxiliary army servants, members of the Vallach tribes, largely from Rumania, but also from Serbia and Bulgaria. These Vallachs were known for centuries as shepherds, nomads, common laborers, household servants etc. During the course of time, when the Turks were occupied elsewhere in wars, these Vallachs were placed its guards on the border line of the Turkish Empire. Thus it happened that they settled down in the Croat country. After the Turks lost these territories, these Vallachs immediately became the chief enemy of the Croat nation, especially of the Moslems whom they called "the Turks."

They used all sort of intrigues and well-known Balkan methods in their hatred against the Catholic and Moslem Croats, alike. In the beginning, they tried to incite religious groups against each other in order to destroy them. As the first target for annihilation they selected the Moslem Croats, which were smaller in number. They sought the aid of their Orthodox brethren in Serbia to achieve this purpose. They were preparing their plans in the capital of Serbia, Belgrade, to take over the two Croatians provinces Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Scrupulously following this plan, one of these Vallachs, fatally shot on June 29, 1914, the Grand

Duke of Austria, Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne. This occurred in the capital of Bosnia, Sarajevo. As a consequence, the First World War began one month later. This war brought misery and enslavement to the Croatian nation, especially to the Croat Moslems.

YUGOSLAVIA, AN ARTIFICIAL STATE— ENEMY OF THE ISLAM

By the dictates of the peace treaties of Versailles-St. German, 1918, the artificial state of "South Slavs," which never existed before, was created. The state was first named the "Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes," which later by a dictatorial decree, was changed into Yugoslavia ("South Slavia"). This unnatural state, under which the Moslems of Bosnia and Herzegovina also came, was nothing else but an enlarged, prewar Serbia, in which the Serbs had full power. In this state, the Catholic and Moslem Croats not only lost their national and religious liberty, but also were doomed to a slow but sure death.

The Yugoslav, or the Serbian government, considered the Moslems as a group, separated by a distance from their religious brethren in Turkey and other Islamic countries, thus helpless; therefore they were declared a "national minority," doomed to slow extermination.

Extermination of Islam in Yugoslavia

The fate of the Turks and Albanian Moslems that were included in pre-war and post-war Serbia (Yugoslavia) can be considered a tragedy. There were approximately 2 million Turks and Albanians who suffered persecution, forcible evacuations and mass killings by Serbs. The same fate was to be applied to the Moslems of Bosnia-and Herzegovina. The reason

as to why this was not able to be carried out in full is to be found in fact that these Moslems did not consider themselves a minority, but a part of the Croatian nation. They allied themselves, with their national brethren, the Croat Catholics, and thus fighting and suffering together they saved at least their lives and their existence. The Serbs realized that they could not exterminate the Croat Moslems as easily as they had the Turks and Albanians, so they postponed the execution of their plan for a more appropriate future occasion. They now took other measures to fulfill this plan:

1) Economically: The destruction of the economic strength of the Croat Moslems was systematic ally carried out from the very first day of the existence of Yugoslavia which can be well seen by the Agrarian-Reform-Plan (i.e. dividing up the land properties of wealthier Croat Moslems and giving it to the Serbs-Vallachs.

2) Politically: The country was entirely dominated by Serbs and all power was in the hands of the Serbian political and military men so that it was impossible for a great number of the elected Moslems parliament members to take any part in the organization and administration of the government. The Croat Moslems organized themselves in spite of all these difficulties into their own political organization. The "Moslem Party" as the only political part of the Moslems in all Yugoslavia which had the full support of the Moslem people. All the elections showed that at least 90% of the Moslem

voters always voted for the Moslem Party. The Moslem masses were aware of the tendencies of the Serbian government which aimed at their destruction, and they stood solidly in opposition against those Serbian tendencies. The result of this hard struggle for existence of the Moslem people was that the Serbs did not succeed in totally destroying Islam in Yugoslavia.

3) Religiously: The Greek Orthodox religion was the only favored religion in Yugoslavia. The tendency in Yugoslavia was to wipe out any other religion, especially Islam. It is easy to understand this attitude when we have in mind the fate of the Turks and Albanian Moslems in pre-war Serbia. According to the Turkish historian Čelebi there were in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, during the Turkish rule no less than 217 Mosques. One by one, these Mosques were destroyed by the Serbs. Only one of them was spared which did not resemble a house of prayer. To ridicule this tragedy of the Moslem, a Serbian night club in Belgrade (BATAL-JAMIA) was named after this last Mosque. This is only one out of many examples. Cases of forcible conversion to the Serb Orthodox Church were of daily occurrence. In this connection, we bring an example of the fate of the village Malce near Nis in Serbia-Yugoslavia. These citizens were forced overnight to convert to the Serbs' Orthodox religion. The means used in carrying out these conversions were threats, discharge from employment and threats with punishments. This was contrary to all governing laws and regulations, against the constitution, according to which the state

never was allowed to interfere with matters pertaining to religion.

A palpable proof of the intentions of the Serbs toward the Croat Moslems was the forcible removal of the religious head of all Moslems in Yugoslavia, Reis-ul-Ulema Hadži Džemaludin Čaušević, the most prominent Islamic scholar of the 20th century, the translator of the Qur'an into Croat language and commentator who, at the same time was the most zealous defender of the religious and political interest of the Croat-Moslems.



Figure 1: Hadži Džemaludin Čaušević, Mulla of Mecca and Medina – religious head of the Croat Moslems. This great Islamic scholar from the very beginning of Yugoslavia stood firmly against her aims – aims for the destruction of Islam by the Serbs.

THE CREATION OF THE CROAT STATE AND CROAT MOSLEMS

From the above mentioned it is easy to understand that every Croat Moslem wholeheartedly greeted the creation of the Croat state. The Croat Moslems as well as the Croat Catholics were anxious to see the downfall of Yugoslavia and the creation of their national and independent state. The opportunity for this came at the beginning of April 1941 when Yugoslavia entered the war.

The whole Croat nation, including all Moslem-Croats, supported the work smashing this prison called Yugoslavia. The Croatian state was proclaimed and created in the capital of Croatia, Zagreb, on the 10th of April 1941. All the Croat Catholics and Moslems alike greeted the proclamation of their own state with great enthusiasm. We, the Croat Moslems, finally obtained not only our full national freedom, but also our long hoped for religious freedom. All of our wishes and hopes were realized in the first weeks and months of the existence of the Croatian independent state. Our joy was indescribable but unfortunately of short duration. The Serbs after losing the war within a few days did not give up their old plan to annihilate the Croat Moslems. The Serbs could not see the Croats free and especially not a Croat state which partly was the successor of the Yugoslav state. The Serbs started the conflict against the Croatian state. They aimed after the biological extermination of the Croat people but especially the Croat Moslems.

Taking advantage of the war situation the Serbs, under the cover of the war "against the occupant," killed as many Croats as they could. This was carried out in the most gruesome manner: torturing, slaughtering, massacring etc. It is impossible to describe in detail the manner in which the tens of thousands of Moslems were brought to a violent death by the Serbs.



Figure 2: Croat Moslems with cut off throats. Such mass killings upon Croatian Moslems by the Serbs were by thousands from April 1941-1945.

THE CRIMINAL ANNIHILATION OF THE MOSLEMS BY THE SERBS

An order of 1941, strictly confidentially given by the Royal Minister of War, of the "Yugoslav Government in exile," General Draža Mihajlović (the worst and most cruel slaughterer of Moslems in history) gave detailed military orders to his troops that, by taking advantage of the military Situation, "they were to destroy all the Moslems in Yugoslavia"; COPIES OF THIS ORDER WERE SENT BY US (the Moslem Organization) TO ALL ISLAMIC STATES. THE BROTHERLY EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT INTERDICTED, DURING THE WAR, THE REPRODUCTION AND SHOWING OF THE FILM "ČETNIK" IN EGYPT (Četnik being the name of the Serb military organization, which carried out these killings).

This order, in fact, was carried out by the Serbs, and we here give reference to the hundreds of thousands of our slaughtered, burnt, and martyred brothers and sisters, and take the liberty to add only one of ninety original documents at our disposal, which clearly gives a true picture of how, and by what clear principles these inhuman deeds were done.

"Djurišić's report to Mihajlović

Headquarters of the Lim-Sandžak, Četnik Department, strictly confidential, February 13th, 1943. The Front.

To the Chief of Staff of the Supreme

Command.—the action in Plevije, ČAJNIĆE and Foča districts against the Moslems has been carried out.

The execution was earned out exactly according to orders. The attack began at the appointed time. All the commanders and units carried out their tasks satisfactorily.

The resistance of the enemy was weak from the beginning. The only serious resistance was at Trebeško Brdo. It lasted 4 hours, and was then broken.

On the night of the 7th of this month our detachment reached the Drina River, so that the battles were mostly completed on that day, and then followed the purging of the liberated territory. ALL MOSLEM VILLAGES IN THE THREE ABOVE MENTIONED DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN BURNED DOWN, SO THAT NOT ONE OF THEIR HOUSES HAS REMAINED UNDAMAGED. ALL PROPERTIES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED EXCEPT THE CATTLE, WHEAT AND HAY. IN CERTAIN PLACES THE COLLECTION OF FODDER AND FOOD HAS BEEN ORDERED SO THAT WE CAN SET UP WAREHOUSES TO PRESERVE FOOD SUPPLIES AND FOOD FOR THE UNITS WHICH HAVE REMAINED ON THE TERRAIN IN ORDER TO PURGE IT AND TO INSPECT THE WOODED AREA, AS WELL AS TO ESTABLISH AND TO STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION ON THE LIBERATED TERRITORY. DURING THE OPERATION, COMPLETE ANNIHILATION OF THE MOSLEM POPULATION WAS UNDERTAKEN,

REGARDLESS OF SEX OR AGE.

VICTIMS: OUR TOTAL LOSSES WERE 22 DEAD, TWO OF WHICH LOST THEIR LIVES ACCIDENTALLY, AND 32 WOUNDED.

AMONG THE MOSLEMS: 1200 FIGHTERS AND ABOUT 8000 OTHER VICTIMS: WOMEN, OLD MEN AND CHILDREN.

DURING THE FIRST OPERATIONS, THE MOSLEMS FLED TOWARDS METELJKI, ČAJNIĆE AND THE DRINA RIVER. A SMALL NUMBER OF THE POPULATION FOUND REFUGE IN METELJKI. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THERE ARE 2000 REFUGEES IN ČAJNIĆE AND SOME SUCCEEDED IN CROSSING THE DRINA BEFORE OUR UNITS HAD CUT OFF THE RETREAT IN THAT DIRECTION. ALL THE REST OF THE POPULATION HAS BEEN ANNIHILATED.

THE MORALE AMONG THE MOSLEMS HAD FALLEN; PANIC CAUSED BY ČETNIKS HAD SPREAD AMONG THEM SO THAT THEY WERE IN UTTER CONFUSION.

ACTION OF THE INVADER IN PLEVLJE AND ČAJNIĆE CONSISTED SIMPLY IN SAFEGUARDING HIS GARRISONS AGAINST EVENTUALITIES.

I SHALL SEND A DETAILED REPORT LATER, TOGETHER WITH APPENDIXES AND SKETCHES.

Commander Major Pavle P. Đurišić .
(Facsimile p 202)

Up to 1944 the vast majority of the Serb National Units had joined, individually or, collectively, the communist "Army of Liberation," the remainder finally was hunted out of the country by the Reds. During all the years of war the "Royal Army at home" as the fighting Serbs, who did not join Tito, called themselves, did not wish to fight either the invaders or communist, but pursued their old plans of annihilating the non-Serbian section of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, the units that joined Tito's "Communist Army of Liberation" were predominately Serbs who are still the chief supporters of the communist regime in Yugoslavia. Tito's army, as a result of predominating Serbian influence, followed the gruesome tactics of the Četniks in carrying out mass murders, and complete destruction of the country-side which from time to time came under their domination.

SERBIAN - COMMUNIST YUGOSLAVIA AND THE CROAT MOSLEMS

With the end of the war, for the second time, a "Yugoslavia," this time a communist one, was forcibly imposed upon the Croat Moslems. The suffering which had been horrible during the unorganized civil war did not cease. As formerly in Royal Yugoslavia, so it is also in communist Yugoslavia. The existence of Croat Moslems is endangered by the Serbian-communist. Hundreds of thousands of Moslem Croats killed during the war were not the last ones to be killed. Even after "peace" came the Moslems were losing their lives. To the hundreds of thousands killed in the war were added about 200 Moslem priests (Ulema) and this number is daily increasing since the country came under Tito's rule.

We take this opportunity to mention the honorable martyrdom of our Mufti of Croatia, Ismet Muftić (1876-1945), who was hanged after the communists who took over control in May 1945 of Zagreb. Two years later, the Serbian-communists completely destroyed the most beautiful Mosque of Europe with three Minarets (this mosque was erected during the Independent State of Croatia in 1941). We also would like to mention the death of the Mufti of the Croat Army, Akif Handžić (1912-1945), hanged in 1945 in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. The same fate was met by the chief of the highest court of Moslems

justice (*Shariah*), Hafiz Ibrahim Mehinagić (1894-1945), who was hanged by the Serbian-communists in 1945. We pay our homage to the known and unknown Moslem priest-preachers, who are languishing in communist prisons in Yugoslavia together with the entire leadership of the Moslems in that unhappy country.



Figure 3: Mufti Ismet Muftić (Žepče, 1876 - Zagreb, 1945). He was hung by Serbian Communists in May 1945 in Zagreb for his Islamic and Croatian convictions.

The following three facts may illustrate very clearly the bearing of the Yugoslav-communist regime upon the whole Islamic group:

- a) Annihilation of the entire Islamic organization by imprisoning all religious leaders;
- b) State-nationalization of all property belonging to religious organization

(WAKF);⁵

- c) Forcing out of existence Islamic justice and the courts of justice which is a sufficient proof of the total obliteration of the Islamic religious life. The Islamic religious leaders were replaced by the communist puppets which in reality are nothing but tools in communistic hands. Islamic schools in which the priest-students formerly received training are deprived of all of their property and thus their existence now is only on the paper. Under the guise that the Arabic language "the language of the Qur'an" is too difficult for children, this subject was eliminated from the school training program by the order of the Yugoslav-communist authorities. With the closing of the Islamic courts of justice and Islamic laws, the path has been opened for mixed marriages. The aim of which has been for the destruction of Islam by destroying the families and their national-religious character.

As regards the so-called legal representation of the Moslems in the "Parliament" there are several persons there who have nothing in common with

⁵ An Islamic religious endowment, usually of land or a building, dedicated to charitable or educational purposes (editor).

Moslems but name. For the above mentioned reasons there remains nothing for the Moslem population under the communist rule, but to organize with the other Croats, the underground-military organizations with the aim: FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND LIBERTY OF THE CROAT MOSLEM NATION AND THE LIBERATION OF THE ENTIRE CROATIAN COUNTRY. The court processes recently inaugurated by the communist government against the members of the organization "the Young Moslems" in various places of Bosnia and Herzegovina (we refer especially to the recent court trials against a considerable large group of Moslem fighters in Sarajevo and Travnik) are the best evidence of the efficiency of the organized anti-communist underground. As much as we sympathize with the suffering of our brethren at home, at the same time we are immensely proud of them because this is one additional proof that our youth is still braving valiantly under terrible difficulties their aim: THE LIBERATION OF OUR MOSLEM CROATS WHICH ALONE CAN BE A WARRANT OF A FREE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISLAM IN THIS WESTERN OUTPOST OF OUR RELIGION.

May we again repeat that we CROAT-MOSLEMS, who fortunately had the opportunity saving our lives, consider it our paramount duty to inform the **entire world** about the sufferings of our Moslem brethren! We beg our Moslem brethren to never to forget their suffering brethren Moslem Croats and to divulge all these sad facts before the

competent world organizations and tribunals.

WE ADDRESS OUR MEMORANDUM TO THE MOTAMAR-E-ALAM-E-ISLAMI (MUSLIM CONGRESS), AND THROUGH THE CONGRESS TO THE ENTIRE ISLAMIC WORLD, TO TAKE TO THE HEART ALL THE ABOVE MENTIONED FACTS, REGARDING THE MOST DANGEROUS SITUATION OF THE CROAT MOSLEMS. WE ESPECIALLY BEG ALL OF OUR ISLAMIC BRETHREN TO SUPPORT THE DEMANDS AND NEEDS OF ONE MILLION OF THEIR RELIGIOUS BRETHREN SO THAT FINALLY THEY MAY OBTAIN THEIR FULL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

ALSO WE ASK THEM FOR A SUPPORT OF THEIR CRYING BRETHREN FOR A FREE CROAT STATE WHICH IS THE ONLY WARRANT FOR ANY HAPPY FUTURE OF ISLAM IN THE BALKANS — ESPECIALLY IN CROATIA — (BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA). AND AFTER THIS GOAL HAS BEEN OBTAINED THROUGH THE HELP OF THE GREAT ALLAH, WE SHALL BE ABLE NOT ONLY TO KEEP ALIVE THIS GREATEST GROUP OF MOSLEMS IN EUROPE BUT ALSO AS IN THE PAST WE SHALL BE THE BEST INTERPRETORS AND LINK BETWEEN THE BROTHERLY ISLAMIC NATIONS AND THE HEART OF EUROPE.

IN THE NAME OF THE CROAT MOSLEMS THE CROAT MOSLEMS IN EMIGRATION.

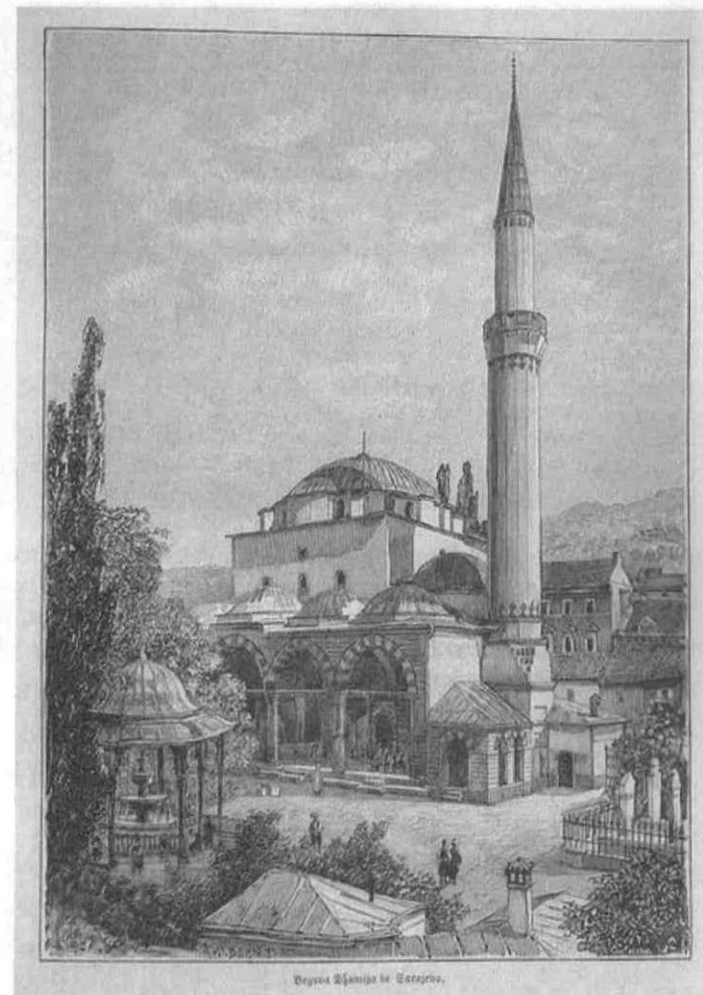


Figure 4: Gazi Husref Beg Mosque and Madresa in Sarajevo, Bosnia. After World War Two it became the only place to train Imams in Bosnia and education was available only at the high school level. The Islamic College and the graduate school for Muftis were both closed in 1946. As a result, the educational level of Bosnian Muslims declined and many became secular, Communist, and inter-married with non-Muslims. Sadly, it seems that the predictions in the writings of Dr. Kulenović came true.

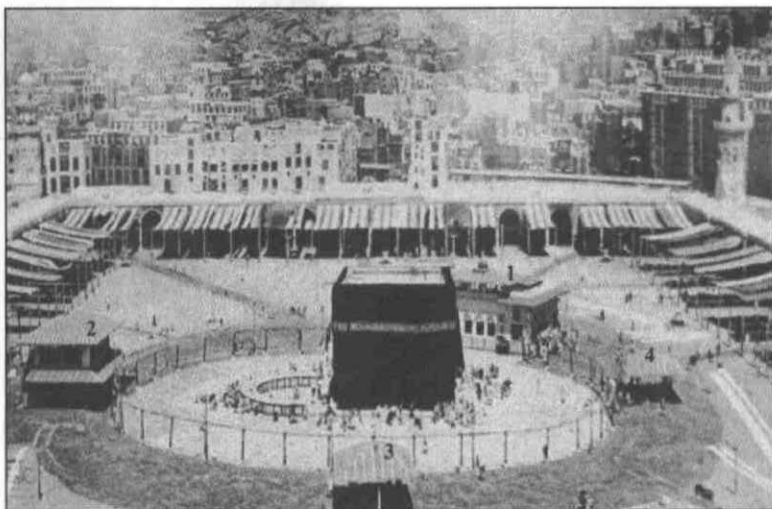


Figure 5: The Holy Kaaba in Mecca with the Maqams (places where the four Sunni Muslim schools were led in prayer). These were destroyed when the Wahabi movement took over in Arabia, just like mosques, schools, and holy places were destroyed in Bosnia when the Communist Serbs took over.

The Declaration by Džafer Bey Kulenović⁶

**President of the Moslem Organization
(The only political party of Croat Moslems)**

When the national leader, who is now in exile, was interviewed by the representatives of the press in September 1950, he was asked to give his opinion concerning the political stand and aspirations of the Croat Moslems in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He gave the following statement:

"Anyone who has lived in Bosnia, and taken part in the national life would be able to answer this question without any hesitation, but that someone may not say that such an answer would be a mere assertion and not a fact, it is necessary to corroborate it with facts.

"During a long political career one can notice various movements and recognize the pulse of the people. This is a most competent factor for any just judgment. We have four important periods in the political life of the Croat Moslems: a) the rule of Turks for about 400 years; b) the occupation of Bosnia and

⁶ This was originally published as "Hrvatati Bosne i Hercegovine odlučno za Državu Harvatsku izjava političkog predstavnika Bosansko-Hercegovačkih Muslimana Dra. Džaferbega Kulenovića," *Danica - Najstariji hrvatski list u Sjevernoj Americi*, Chicago, Ill., S.A.D., Vol. XXX, No. 35, July 30, 1950: page one.

Herzegovina by the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy (1878-1918); c) the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918; and, d) the creation of the Croat State in 1941. All these four periods are decisive factors in giving an objective answer to the question; an answer which would satisfy the majority of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are, as it is known, inhabited by the people of the Catholic, Islamic and Greek Orthodox faith. The Catholics and Moslems are Croats; the Orthodox, Serbs.

"During the Turkish rule, the Moslems of Bosnia and Herzegovina, although followers of the same religion to which the Turks belong, lived a segregated life, preserving their national customs and their language and even at the time of the well known insurrection of Hussein Bey Gradašević (1802-1834), called "Dragon of Bosnia,"⁷ fought with arms against the Sultan. Thus they gave evidence of their desire to live as free people in a free country.

"When after the Berlin Congress of 1878 Turkey had to withdraw her troops from the territory of Bosnian and Herzegovina, the Moslems of these two provinces resisted the occupying forces so intensely that according to the historian Prof. Dr. M. Mandić,⁸ the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy lost

⁷ Znaj od Bosne (ed.). He was died after being exiles from Bosnia under mysterious circumstances on his birthday, August 31st, in Constantinople. He is regarded today as a Bosnia national hero.

⁸ Mihodil Mandić, *Povijest okupacije Bosne i Hercegovine 1878* (Zagreb, 1910).

about 30,000 soldiers during the ensuing clashes. This is at proof that the Croat Moslems at this occasion, showed their patriotism. Although they did not boast about this fact, their work, however, was patriotic in the spirit of the Croatian interests, and deeds are much more important than empty phrases.

"After the downfall of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, it was followed by Yugoslavia. The Moslems gathered together. Out of 52 elected deputies for the Parliament, which Bosnia and Herzegovina sent to the Constitutional Congress, 24 were Moslems. When filling in their questionnaires for National Assembly, they gave as their nationality, CROAT; besides these, 14 Croat Catholics were elected, and only 14 were elected to represent the Serbs. This shows that Bosnia and Herzegovina were represented in the National Assembly, by more than 2/3 (two thirds) Croat majority, which is a lasting proof that these provinces are Croatian.

"After the downfall of Yugoslavia, the Catholics as well as the Moslems greeted with enthusiasm the creation of the Croat state as their own state. They defended from the very beginning its existence from the Serbian Četniks and Serbian-communists.

"Taking into account the above mentioned facts, it is clear that the absolute majority of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Croat, and that this majority of the population wants to have its own total independent state of Croatia, into which the whole Bosnia, Herzegovina and Sandžak should be

incorporated. In that state the democratic system of Government should be the supreme, law.

"In favor of my opinion, is the fact, that during the existence of the Yugoslav state, the Croatian people suffered severely, especially the Croat Moslems. When we add to this, all that occurred from 1941 up to the present—those cruel killings and criminal excesses were perpetuated by the Serbs upon the Croats – which can never be forgotten – all these facts speak for themselves and make the desire of the Croat Catholics and Moslems even stronger to fight for their own independent State of Croatia.

"This is the feeling of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Whole Croat people."

RESOLUTION BY THE CROAT-MOSLEMS, Concluded in Chicago, U.S.A., November 1950⁹

We herewith beg to quote the main points, contained in the resolution, given at the Congress of all Croat-Moslems in emigration, including the territories: BOSNIA, HERZEGOVINA, and SANDŽAK.

"We demand:

1) The Creation of the Croat Republic, which will also include the territories Bosnia, Herzegovina and Sandžak, within the historical borders of all constituting parts of the Republic.

2) The entry of Croatia into the UNITED NATIONS, and anti the tightest co-operation in all mutual political and economical actions at the West-European nations.

3) The recognition of the human rights, and the unlimited equality of all the inhabitants of the Croat Republic, without consideration of origin, faith, gender and conviction.

4) The creation of a democratic legislation in western pattern, and the interior administration of the Croat Republic either to be of Centralistic, Federative or on Autonomic basis, according to the free will of the Croat nation, expressed in fully free,

⁹ "Memorandum Hrvata Muslimana Bosne, Hercegovine i Sandžaka iz God. 1950." *Hrvatska*, Buenos Aires, December 2, 1950. Vol. IV, No. 23: page one.

general elections.

5) The battle for the suppression of Communism and all dictatorial movements, which threaten to suppress the democratic rights in whatever form it be – with all means at disposal.

6) The speeding up of the cultural and economical development, and the full emancipation in all parts of the Croat Republic, especially of the parts destroyed during the war, and the economically backward areas.

7) The political bearing of the Croat Republic to be in tightest co-operation with the great American Democracy and all liberty-loving and peace loving nations.

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